

## OPINION

# Under the Spell of the Colonel

DANIEL SIMON/GAMMA

**By Nathaniel Pastor**

*Newsweek* wonders whether he is "the most dangerous man in the world?"—and begins his name with a K. *Time* says he is "the world's most notorious supporter of international terrorism"—and begins his name with a G. The *New York Times* describes him as "the leader of the militant Arab nation in North Africa"—and begins his name with a Q. And the *Wall Street Journal*, after flirting with a K, adding an h, dropping one d and ending with a y, has since changed the K to a Q, repositioned the h and substituted an i for the y.

So y am i disturbed by such editorial license when scholars assure me there is no standard way to transliterate Arabic? Well, obviously, the Libyan leader is too mercurial a character to trifle with. If the State Department believes he is an immediate menace to the Sudan and an ultimate threat to world peace, why raise his dander, especially over a matter involving his name? If, as our intelligence sources claimed last year, he was not above dispatching a squad of gunmen to assassinate President Reagan, shouldn't we exercise extreme caution in *all* of our dealings with him, again including the uniform treatment of his name? And if the mavens who manage our media feel he's so downright dangerous, isn't it the better part of discretion to inquire how *he* would like to see his name in the American press?

Were he to begin it with a Q, might he not opt for a following u? And instead of a double d and a single f, or a single d and a double f, might he not prefer, in keeping with his militant image, the macho look of both a double d and a double f? (To my knowledge, no member of the press has yet tried that mutation. See sidebar.) Moreover, did the *Wall Street Journal* discover something not yet known to the others when, in a turn-about last year, it made those changes noted earlier?

I began to wonder if the Libyan leader is familiar with the line "I don't care what you say about me as long as you spell my name right." I guess he isn't, for I haven't noticed a single letter to the editors protesting these di-

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**Colonel Muammar . . . ?**

**Khadafy is used by:**

Associated Press  
Atlanta Journal / Constitution  
Baltimore Evening Sun  
Boston Globe  
Chicago Tribune  
Denver Post  
Houston Chronicle  
New York Daily News  
New York Post  
Philadelphia Inquirer  
UPI  
USA Today

**Qaddafi is used by:**

Christian Science Monitor  
New York Times  
Washington Post

**Qadhafi is used by:**

U.S. News & World Report  
Wall Street Journal

**Qadafi is used by:**

Business Week  
Toronto Globe and Mail

**Kadafi is used by:**

Baltimore Sun  
Los Angeles Times

**Kaddafi is used by:**

Newsweek

**Gaddafi is used by:**

Time

vergent treatments. Then I got to thinking about the editors themselves. Are they, in their divergence, judi-

cious or capricious? Is it likely, for example, that the editors of *Newsweek* and *Time* would consider it heresy to copy each other? This notion gained some validity when I discovered, in their respective references to Iran's leaders, that *Newsweek* prefers Ayatollah to *Time*'s Ayatullah, whereas *Time* counters with Banisadr to *Newsweek*'s Bani Sadr.

Equally puzzling is why *Newsweek*, a publication owned by the Washington Post Co., insists on the use of Kaddafi when the *Washington Post*, its esteemed sister, likes to use Qaddafi. Is this a case of sibling rivalry or simply pride of individuality?

In yet another "family" aberration, perhaps the strangest of all, the morning edition of the *Baltimore Sun* rises to the occasion with the h-less and i-filling Kadafi, whereas the evening edition of the same paper sets its sights on Khadafy. If these disparate spellings fail to confuse—or amuse—the readers of *both* editions, I like to think they would not have been lost on the likes of H.L. Mencken or A.J. Liebling.

I realize that license to spell is a far cry from license to kill, but aren't we consumers of print already too limp and bewildered by the daily dichotomies of economists (Reaganomic supply-siders vs. Keynesian budget-balancers) to cope with the conundrums of our leading journalists?

Most of us, I'm sure, treasure the freedom of agreeing to disagree, but when the result is disunity at the expense of clarity, and the world and our president may be hanging in the balance, it is time to set things right.

Accordingly, I hope to convene a one-day conference of key magazine and newspaper editors at my new condominium in Florida. The morning shall be given over to golf, tennis, swimming, jogging or whatever will soften them up for the afternoon when, with the pounding of my gavel and unlimited access to stingers, sours and wallbangers, we shall commence to thrash out a consensus on how to spell the names of all the big wheels in Islam.

Nothing will stop me in this intensive quest for clarity, unless it's a ruling by the IRS that I cannot deduct the conference costs from my income tax. After all, there comes a time when even the cost of clarity could—clearly—be too steep. ●

## CLIPPINGS

# LIFE COMES TO THE MOVIES

"It's going to be to movies what *Sports Illustrated* is to sports," says Joe Armstrong, publisher of the slick new monthly magazine scheduled to appear in June.

"It's not going to be called *Film* or *Cinema*, it's going to be called *The Movies*," says Editor Charles Michener, eager to remove it from the realm of esoterica.

Armstrong, 38, is the former publisher of *Rolling Stone*, *New York* and *New West* magazines. He is funding *The Movies* in a joint partnership with Houston real estate entrepreneur Niel Morgan.

Michener, formerly senior editor for cultural affairs at *Newsweek*, says *The Movies* will be a general interest magazine of ideas that happens to be about movies. . . . Writers scheduled to appear in early issues include novelist Michael Herr and British screen and TV writer Frederic Raphael (*The Glittering Prizes*). J. Hoberman, film critic for the *Village Voice*, will write a column covering movies on TV. There will be movie reviews and critical essays.

*The Movies* starts with a circulation of 100,000, Armstrong says, and he hopes to build to 500,000.

**Richard Lee**

# TAKING TO THE AIR

*USA Today* is launching a spring offensive from the air. In concert with the Mutual Broadcasting System, Gannett News Service is taking to the radio to broadcast three daily features from the same-day pages of its national newspaper. Via satellite, Dick Purtan of the Gannett-owned WCZY-FM in Detroit will announce the "Money" section, Rick Dees of the Gannett-owned KIIS-FM in Los Angeles will report on "Entertainment" and Gary Owens of Gannett's KPRZ-AM, also in Los Angeles, will report the "Life" segments. Mutual expects that 300 to 400 stations will run the one-minute spots, but they're exerting extra effort to air them in Philadelphia and New

York, where *USA Today* is next scheduled to debut. "The *USA Today* will mark a new step for newspapers," says John Quinn, president of Gannett, adding, "The simultaneous transmission in two different media will extend the reach of *USA Today* and introduce our newspaper to millions of radio listeners." Plans are already afoot for more McRadio. Dan Flamberg of Mutual says, "There are many more areas of the newspaper suitable for being made into one-minute radio segments."

**Thomas Hartman**

# THE SENATOR AND THE STAR

"MY LIFE WITH LIZ TAYLOR . . . WHY OUR MARRIAGE ENDED, BY JOHN WARNER" read the juicy headline in the tabloid *The Star*. Senator Warner was not amused. Not that the quotes attributed to him about his movie star ex-wife were fictional; they were generally accurate. Rather, Warner was agitated because *The Star's* so-called "world exclusive" had been lifted directly from a lengthy personal and political interview he had given to a reporter representing the more proper *Los Angeles Times* syndicate.

"I thought it was a *Los Angeles Times* interview for their Sunday editions. That's why I was willing to give so much time to it," lamented Warner after seeing his quotes featured in the supermarket tattler.

While willing to discuss his relationship with Taylor, Warner did not expect another "Mr. Elizabeth Taylor" story like the many that have dogged his political career.

Warner thought the interview represented a chance to get his political accomplishments on the record but instead of a front-page profile in the prestigious *Times*, the senator's words turned up in the pages of one of the gossip sheets that had relentlessly covered his courtship and marriage to Taylor.

Last summer, Warner agreed that a free-lance writer, Angela Fox-Dunn, could follow him around Capitol Hill and his Virginia estate for three days,

observing his daily routine and asking questions for a story for the *L.A. Times* syndicate.

Fox-Dunn stresses that she aimed for a "50-50 split" between personal and political angles in her two-part story. But, she says, "I have no control over what the editor of a publication will do," noting that "*The Star* decided to drop the [political] stuff."

What resulted was a two-part "world exclusive interview" in *The Star* in which Liz was quoted as saying (in 1976): "John is the best lover I ever had—I want to spend the rest of my life with him."

*Times* syndicate special series editor Steve Temkin explains that the interview was routinely sold to *The Star* along with a dozen other newspaper clients, including the *Norfolk* (Virginia) *Ledger-Star* and *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

*The Star* "rushed to print," ahead of the other customers and misrepresented the "exclusivity" angle, says Temkin. "I made my apologies . . . [but] Warner felt he had been cruelly ripped off by *The Star*." Temkin insists that "we were dealing squarely with him" and that he has talked to *The Star* about embargoes and taking "liberties" with copy.

Warner says, "This hoax makes it tough for the more legitimate" press. "I hope others will learn from my experience . . . you just have to be very careful."

**Jack Mitchell  
and Bill Gruver**

# COPY FIX

Does your verbs match their subjects good? Or do your participles dangle? Dial the Grammar Hotline in Queens, New York—that's (212) R-E-W-R-I-T-E—and Monday through Friday afternoons a full professor of English will steer you out of the woods, no questions asked, not even your name.

Started late last semester by English professors of York College in Queens, mainly to help students punctuate their term papers, Hotline had to add a second phone line after the *Wall Street Journal* got wind of its work. Most-asked question: What constitutes a plural? (The president, together with his staff—singular verb, please). Other pitfalls: commas, semicolons, restrictive clauses. "We had a call from California about a comma," said a professor-of-the-day, "and how to spell a word, can you imagine that?" Hotline's most-used tool? A dictionary.